



To: Safe Driving Smart Options (SDSO): Keys to Lifelong Mobility Stakeholders

Below is a sample article providing readers with information about the issue of aging and mobility and the resources available to them on the SDSO website. It was prepared by the SDSO Communications Subcommittee. You are requested to please use it for your organization's newsletters, website, social media outlets, etc. as you wish.

If you have any questions, Carol Reagan, SDSO Operating Committee Chair, may be reached at [ReaganC@Michigan.gov](mailto:ReaganC@Michigan.gov) or 517.241.3567.

Additional materials such as the SDSO logo, fact sheets are available on the SDSO site at [www.Michigan.gov/agingdriver](http://www.Michigan.gov/agingdriver) on the "About Us" page.

## **Smart options for keeping aging drivers safe**

One of the most common concerns among aging drivers and their loved ones is the ever-present issue of ‘taking away the car keys.’ Worry about an aging driver’s growing inattentiveness, miscalculations, or confusion behind the wheel frequently start such discussions. However, it is the ultimate separation of driver from vehicle and the subsequent loss of independence that makes the topic so challenging. Recognizing a lack of cohesive information and guidance on the topic of aging drivers, a coalition of private and public partners launched Safe Drivers Smart Options: Keys to Lifelong Mobility in 2015.

The focal point of the Safe Drivers Smart Options initiative is the [www.michigan.gov/agingdriver](http://www.michigan.gov/agingdriver) website. Recognized for excellence by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators and AAMVA’s Public Affairs and Consumer Education awards program, the website provides information and resources for drivers, their families and the professionals who work with them. It includes driving self-assessment tools, videos, links to driver refresher courses, information about how medications and health problems may affect driving, lists of resources available to drivers once they stop driving and other community supports for aging drivers. Families and caregivers will find strategies for initiating conversations about when and how to transition to a non-driving lifestyle included within the website. Information about the aging process and how to most effectively interact with older drivers is adapted for audiences such as law enforcement, healthcare and other professionals.

The question becomes how best to determine when to stop driving and what strategies can be developed to ease this difficult milestone so that the aging driver can continue to be a safe, active and mobile member of society. Any plan to assist aging drivers must include the following strategies:

- Help aging drivers continue to drive safely
- Help aging drivers transition to driving retirement
- Support the use of community mobility options

The fastest growing segment of Michigan's population are residents age 65 and older. Of the state's 7.1 million licensed drivers, approximately 1.4 million fall within that age bracket. Also, it is estimated that by 2020, one of every five Michigan drivers will be over 65 years of age. Living in a state heralded as the birthplace of the automobile industry, our love of cars and the freedom they represent is part of our culture. The prospect of losing that independence can be frightening to the point where we may deny or delay taking any action. Inaction may be dangerous. The Safe Drivers Smart Options website provides the roadmap needed to make informed decisions to keep aging loved ones safe and mobile.

Visit the Safe Drivers Smart Options website at [www.michigan.gov/agingdriver](http://www.michigan.gov/agingdriver).